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Anchor Inn completion delayed until Aug. 1



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JAKE MAGEE
July 2, 2015



ANTHONY WAHL

Owner John Kinnett gives a short tour of the construction at the Anchor Inn in Newville. The building, which was destroyed by a fire last summer, will be roughly three times larger than it used to be. Kinnett hopes to have the main building open by Aug. 1. The outdoor bar and stage have been open weekends since Memorial Day.

NEWVILLE—If you were hoping to celebrate Independence Day at the rebuilt Anchor Inn, you might want to rethink your plans.

The Anchor Inn's Naughty Mermaid Bar and outside stage have been open weekends since Memorial Day, but the main building—destroyed by a fire last August—remains under

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Aug. 1.

Owner John Kinnett had hoped to have his business open by July Fourth, but the weather has continued to thwart his plans.

“Mother Nature kinda backed us up a bit with all the rain that happened in June,” he said. “The rain, when we were doing the foundation, made it such a mess that we couldn't get in the hole and put in the footings.”

Earlier this week, contractors had to wait for four hours before the rain let up enough to let them work. They worked on the roof Wednesday, but they would have been finished by now if the weather had cooperated, Kinnett said.

When one contractor faces delays, “it ripples right down the line,” he said. Sometimes workers will leave a job facing stormy weather and travel to a different site under clear skies.

Still, it's better to take things slowly and do them right, and Kinnett isn't cutting any corners—not figuratively anyway.

The roof is a slanted, seamless panel of steel made to keep things dry and uniform-looking.

“It's watertight. This thing is so well built,” Kinnett said.

Bathrooms near the 30-foot, horseshoe-shaped bar have a Wisconsin Badgers theme with white, red and black wall tiles. A company from Madison will paint murals of the Kohl Center and Randall Stadium on the ceiling.

Not far away, bathrooms near the new banquet hall addition feature paneling that looks like it came from an old, unpainted barn wall. The new banquet hall replaces the outdoor tent that used to host wedding receptions and reunions.

The new Anchor Inn will have a kitchen and office like before, but it also will offer two upstairs rooms that groups can rent. Both

construction. Opening day is now set for Saturday,



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open onto a patio that looks down on the yard, band stage and Rock River.

Kinnett knows he has to have the inn ready soon because two parties have already rented out both rooms for Aug. 1, he said.

Between now and the beginning of August, contractors will build the kitchen, office and bars; put up drywall; install flooring and finish painting. If the kitchen is open for business at that point, it will feature a limited menu, Kinnett said.

One challenge is staffing. The Anchor Inn has about 10 to 15 previous employees coming back, but during the summer, the inn usually has about 70 people on staff.

“Our staffing is always based on college kids, and usually they start to go back (to school) by Aug. 15,” Kinnett said. “Is it worth it to go full-bore and try to get everybody trained for a month, 15 days? Probably not.”

The inn might not be fully operational yet, but customers are showing their support.

When the Naughty Mermaid opened this year, about 250 people showed up—a blowout for such a small bar. When the inn opens, every business in the area will profit as customers return, Kinnett said.

“What we're looking forward to is next spring: We'll have this thing humming on all cylinders,” he said. “Next year, it's gonna be incredible here. That's what's keeping us going right now.”



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